

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the rejections. In addition, the applicant requests a personal interview to be attended by the undersigned patent attorney and a company representative. Applicant points out that this invention has become very important in the marketplace (and is being adopted by others due to its unique properties and advantages).

In the office action, the examiner has taken the position that the claims are obvious in light of the prior art. In particular, the examiner has asserted that the prior art teaches the use of a Prusik hitch as a safety rope grab. It is respectfully pointed out that the references the examiner points to all disclose the use of a Prusik hitch for other purposes, which purposes are different than in the invention as claims. Obviously, the present applicant has not invented the Prusik hitch. Instead, the applicant has discovered that through the use of a Prusik hitch, an improved safety harness arrangement can be achieved.

In the prior art references relied on by the examiner for the idea that a Prusik hitch can be a "safety rope grab" (as characterized by the examiner), the Prusik hitch is used as a climbing tool or a lifting tool. Indeed, most of these references generally show two Prusik hitches attached to a rope or ropes such that a climber can support his weight on a rope attached with one Prusik hitch and lift himself up somewhat, then reposition the other Prusik hitch, then lift himself up using that Prusik hitch and then moving the first Prusik hitch upwardly. By this method, Prusik hitches can be used to allow a user to climb. However, climbing is not the purpose or goal of the present invention. Instead, the present invention is directed to avoiding injury should someone begin to fall from an elevated position. Once they've fallen, climbing back up is **not** part of the claimed invention. In the claimed safety device and method, the Prusik hitch is used to arrest the user's fall. The Applicant has discovered that the Prusik hitch becomes progressively tighter as the user falls, thereby providing a progressive braking action. This progressive braking action provides improved safety in that it avoids the sudden snap or jerk at the end of the fall as happens when a conventional safety line reaches its length limit. The Prusik hitch

employed in the present invention allows some "give" due to the sliding nature and progressive braking such that the falling user is progressively slowed until he is ultimately stopped, rather than being stopped all once.

In particular the examiner relies in part on Kammerer for the idea that a Prusik hitch can be used as a safety rope grab. However, this patent describes the Prusik hitch as a recovery device for allowing a fallen climber to reascend to his earlier position (see Col. 1). The "KNOTS" reference also shows the Prusik hitch as a climbing device, not as a device for arresting a fall once underway. The Ascherin patent shows the use of a Prusik hitch as a sort of clutch for a winch used in rescue of a fallen person. None of these patents disclose the use of a Prusik hitch for arresting a fall, taking advantage of the sliding connection of a Prusik hitch to provide braking.

Accordingly, is respectfully submitted that the invention as claimed in the present claims is not obvious in light of the prior art cited by the examiner. Therefore, applicant respectfully requests for reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections. Moreover, the applicant respectfully requests the opportunity for an interview with the examiner in person to discuss the application in greater detail. Applicant believes that a personal interview can materially further the prosecution of the application towards an ultimate disposition one way or another. The Examiner is urged to telephone Applicant's undersigned attorney at 770.984.2300 to schedule such an interview.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. A. Gardner', written over a horizontal line.

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